R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 012 286 UD 003 517

SCORE - A DESCRIPTION.

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PUB DATE 63

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.09 HC-$0.48 12P.

DESCRIPTORS- *DELINQUENCY PREVENTION, *JUVENILE GANGS, *URBAN AREAS, CRIME, *POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT, MALES, POLICE, AGGRESSION, BEHAVIOR, FINANCIAL SUPPORT, SOCIOPSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, BEHAVIOR THEORIES, DELINQUENTS, ROLE THEORY, COUNSELOR ROLE, PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS, SCORE PROJECT

REINFORCEMENT AND ROLE-REVERSAL TECHNIQUES ARE USED IN THE SCORE PROJECT, A LOW-COST PROGRAM OF DELINQUENCY PREVENTION FOR HARD-CORE TEENAGE STREET CORNER BOYS. COMMITTED TO THE BELIEF THAT THE BOYS HAVE THE POTENTIAL FOR ETHICAL BEHAVIOR, THE SCORE WORKER FOLLOWS B.F. SKINNER'S THEORY OF OPERANT CONDITIONING AND REINFORCES THE DELINQUENT'S GOOD BEHAVIOR THROUGH REWARDS. FUTHERMORE, THE WORKER IN THE USE OF ROLE-REVERSAL TECHNIQUES MAKES THE DELINQUENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR REDUCING CRIME IN THE COMMUNITY. HOWEVER, THE SCORE WORKER DOES NOT AIM TO ACHIEVE PERSONALITY CHANGE OR COMMUNITY SPIRIT. SCORE PROJECTS BEGIN WITH PRIVATE OR COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND A SURVEY OF THE TEENAGE CRIME RATE IN THE AREA. LIAISON WITH THE POLICE IS IMPORTANT AT THIS POINT FOR VERIFYING OFFENSES, DETERMINING THE PATTERN, AND LOCATING THE HARD-CORE OFFENDERS. SUCH INTERVENTIONS AS OFFERING FREE COFFEE AND DONUTS DURING HIGH CRIME HOURS AND GIVING THE BOYS A CHANCE TO EXPRESS AGGRESSION "SAFELY" ARE USED IN THE BEGINNING OF THE PROGRAM. BASED IN A STOREFRONT OR LOFT. THE WORKER LATER PAYS THE BOYS FOR DESIRABLE BEHAVIOR AND COOPERATES IN FINANCING CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIVITIES. IMMEDIATE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS IS ESSENTIAL FOR CARRYING OUT THESE ACTIVITIES. (NH)

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SCORE - A DESCRIPTION

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SCORE is a low-cost offense reduction system for use with hard-core teenage street corner boys in metropolitan areas. It has been effective in two communities in New York City and Cambridge, Massachusetts, primarily because it is based on humanistic and scientific principles, basic research findings, and new experimentally-tested techniques. Among the techniques that distinguish this program are the use of reinforcers and role-reversal to reduce crime, the setting-up of a new relationship between the SCORE worker and the teenagers, analogous to that of the scientist to his research subject, and the encouragement of broad community support and participation. In addition to a well-worked out incentive system for gaining the cooperation of recalcitrant delinquents, there is built-in measurement (SCOREBOARD) of results, and efficiency guidelines for one part-time SCORE worker. Depending upon the geographical mobility and the geographical spread of residences and "hangouts" of the boys, or in general depending upon the ease of reaching the boys, a single part-time SCORE worker can handle from 30-50 teenagers, assuming that somewhat less than half of them have long records and histories of previous incarceration.

With this armorarium, SCORE is ready for use and further development in five eligible communities in the Fall of 1963. Any diverse group of individuals which can raise $5,000 and which can

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make the claim to being representative of community thought and action at the citizen level and leading in its concern for the problems of delinquency can sponsor a SCORE project. What follows describes the principles, techniques, the operating conditions, the means of determining community eligibility, and the stages of the project.

Effectiveness - SCORE has been effective in reducing crime among teenagers as measured by a two-year follow-up study conducted at Harvard University and published as a Ph.D. thesis by Dr. Ralph Schwitzgebel, a former student of Dr. Slack's. Schwitzgebel's thesis showed that the group using SCORE methods had significantly fewer offenses, months in reform school, and achieved a reduction in the severity of offenses as compared to a matched control group. The follow-up study was conducted after the SCORE worker was withdrawn from the scene.

Scientific Basis - SCORE as a project is based upon both scientific and humanistic principles. The humanistic principles can be stated, albeit inadequately, as follows: Within each individual resides the potential for maturity and ethical behavior. The scientific principle is that man is at least an animal and that behavior is controlled by its consequences. These consequences are technically termed reinforcers, and they are defined as those concrete good services and events which tend to strengthen behaviors which they follow.

From Theory to Practice - The primary scientific theory which underlies SCORE is that of the reinforcement of appropriate behavior.

This theory is derived from the work of B. F. Skinner and his colleagues at Harvard. Skinner discovered that to force an animal to make a response does not strengthen the response; waiting until the response is naturally emitted, however, and then following that response with a reinforcement (in the case of an animal, this might be anything from a pellet of food; in the case of street corner kid, this might be anything from a ride in a fancy car to status, prestige or even if he is hungry, food.) This solution has been summed up in practical terms by a prominent 19-year old street corner kid, Arnold Gonzales, as "Kill them with kindness."

New Ways - A SCORE worker then uses reinforcers to reduce crime. The reinforcers are such things as money, food, clothes, a Cadillac limousine, a prestige place to meet, etc., as the rewards for good behavior on the part of the street corner kids. Furthermore, the SCORE worker uses a role-reversal technique in which the job of reducing crime is turned over to the youths themselves, and they become the actual workers. The teenagers help the SCORE worker to reduce crime in the community instead of the usual social service relationship in which the worker is paid to help youth. Therefore, when you visit a SCORE project and talk to the teenagers, you hear them talk about their activities in regard to reducing criminal behavior within their group. The efforts of the teenagers to reduce crime in their community are filled with exciting incidents and make in whole and in part a thrilling story of conflict both within the individual and between the individual and society.

The relationship of the SCORE worker to the teenagers is that of a scientist to his research subjects. The first SCORE project was designed and run by a Harvard professor, Charles W. Slack. It was Slack's discovery that if the relationahip of a research scientist to his subject was used, instead of the doctor-patient relationship or student-teacher relationship, that cooperation and positive regard could be gained from even the most recalcitrant street corner offenders. In the present on-going SCORE projects on the West Side of New York and Cambridge, Mass., the teenagers consider themselves as scientists and research subjects (as workers in discovering the cause and cure of juvenile crime) rather than as patients, students, or welfare cases. Any work on a SCORE project which can be done by a street corner boy is done by him. Teenagers are paid small sums for work which they do for SCORE and are considered as colleagues of the SCORE worker.

Therefore, teenagers and worker alike consider themselves as applied scientists doing a job for the community. This job insists on the production of clean-man days -- that is, trouble and crime-free days in areas which would otherwise be filled with violent and anti-social behavior.

<u>What It Is Not</u> - While a SCORE project achieves its very limited goal of reduction of the incidence of juvenile offenses, it is important to say what it is not. Character development within the boys, personality change, constructive activities and other evidence of maturity and social responsibility on the part of the SCORE group is

to be expected, but cannot be promised. Likewise, involvement and a sense of achievement on the part of the community is usual, but not a necessary concomitant. In other words, the SCORE worker is not paid to produce personality change or build community esprit de corps, although he probably will accomplish both.

Also SCORE as a system is not designed to work with the milder forms of adolescent rebellion, nor is it designed to be effective with middle-class teenagers who have cars.

Further, the YMCA or the local temple or church is not an ideal setting for a SCORE project. Where SCORE projects have attempted to operate under such auspices, they have tended to run into conflict with the special goals of such institution. And tax money cannot be used to support SCORE becuuse much of the cost of SCORE is in funds paid directly to hard-core delinquent boys in order to reinforce their participation in constructive activities.

A SCORE worker does not play the role of the traditional social worker, psychiatrist, or psychologist. The SCORE worker does not render service to youth, but quite the opposite, youth are induced to render a service to their community by working for SCORE. The best way to understand SCORE is to talk to the street corner boys who are involved in it. They are experts. They are familiar with delinquency and know how to reduce it.

A SCORE Community - SCORE is designed to be supported by private citizens or by private citizens and by private agencies interested in reducing crime in their community as opposed to service to youth. It

is conceivable that special community groups can be set up to sponsor a SCORE project. However constituted, the responsible community authority would be empowered in the following ways:

First, it is recognized that a SCORE project is being conducted under their auspices and that they are administering the funds; secondly, that steps have been taken so that the records of offenses committed by the group of boys can be confirmed or disconfirmed and corrected to accuracy by the police. This does not mean that the police would be authorized to release their records to the community authority but merely that they be allowed to make necessary corrections and confirm SCORE's record of offenses. Generally, it would be advisable for the community authority to meet once a month. The community authority will appoint or elect a Criterion Board to handle the problem of lending weight and authority to the criteria measures and of working closely with the SCORE worker. The initial act of the community authority, however, is to undertake a pre-project survey.

The Survey - Before a SCORE project can officially begin, there should be a measure of the rate of offenses committed by adolescents in the area. The reliability of the measures of SCORE's success or failure will be completely dependent upon the reliability of this preliminary survey. Regarding the preliminary survey, the following points are vital: (1) The longer the survey time period prior to the introduction of SCORE, the more reliably one can assess SCORE's effect.

Communities seem to feel that two or three months is sufficient. Experts appear unhappy at one year. Three or four months is probably the happy medium.

To begin, a list is made of all street corner boys, gang members and non-gang members alike, who hang out in the area or who live in the area. Of the boys on the list, a record of the following events should be kept on a calendar: (1) negative police contacts, (2) arrests, (3) adjudicated offenses, (4) days of incarceration. A fairly good estimate of these data can be obtained by questioning (1) the boys themselves and (2) responsible adults (street club workers, settlement house workers, clergy, etc.). The police may or may not be legally empowered to help in the collection of these data, since in many cases, juvenile records are withheld by law from public inspection. It is not the aim of the survey to find out the records of individual boys, but merely to (1) determine the pattern of juvenile offenses in the area, and (2) to discover who the apparent hard-core offenders are. Example: In the Chelsea-Clinton area during the month of February, the worker discovered that almost all offenses occurred at night and in the early morning hours. It was during these hours that the streets were deserted and the boys felt that they owned their turf. During the month of February, a worker staying up these hours counted over 100 negative police contacts. Seventy-five of these occurred in one all-night restaurant where the boys were hanging out and where the manager kept complaining to the police. The others involved such events as singing and drinking in doorways, conspicuously

loitering with groups in early morning hours, etc. There were four arrests during February and two convictions from previous arrests. The four arrests resulted in pre-trial incarceration, and there were two boys from the area who had already been incarcerated before February. There was agreement both among the boys and responsible adults regarding the validity of these counts. But there are many patterns of crime which are eligible for the SCORE treatment. For example, one SCORE project was set up to start work only with boys who were on their way out of institutions and were therefore highly likely to relapse.

The Operation - Generally, a SCORE project begins with stopgap measures to handle immediate problems. If there is an acute problem, the SCORE worker will begin by taking steps to handle this acute problem. For example, the high rate of negative police contacts was stopgapped by providing free coffee and donuts in a church building during the late evening and early morning hours and by moving the groups into this safer place where negative police contacts were less likely to occur. Also, in the beginning some provision will usually have to be made for the boys to let off steam by providing a chance to express hostility under safe circumstances. Psychodrama, sociodrama, recorded interviews, and sports are all potential means for allowing the boys to let off steam. The important thing is that the SCORE worker does not run a program in athletics or psychodrama in the usual sense, but uses these techniques in order to provide an immediate release of

built-up emotions as long as they are necessary. Dramatic techniques are excellent since they allow for a stimulation of events in real life which are causing irritation. In the beginning the SCORE worker will work with his group in some safe place such as a church, but eventually it will seem appropriate for SCORE to get a place of its own. A store front or inexpensive loft will suffice. By this time, the youngsters know what SCORE is, what its aims are, and the concrete nature of its activity in reducing crime has been proved to them. During its early stages, the SCORE worker gives small sums of money to the boys for engaging in activities which the worker desires. He is in a sense hiring the boys to be his cohorts in the business of reducing crime. Payments to the boys for tape recorded interviews, acting and making speeches or merely for attendance at a group meeting are made immediately and in cash, and these sums delivered steadily have the effect on the average of decreasing stealing among the group.

The SCORE worker makes his automobile available to the group in the following fashion: he allows the boys to direct him or a responsible adult as driver wherever they want to go and thus engenders on their part a feeling of possession of the car. This technique has the effect of reducing car theft and unauthorized use of automobiles. He cooperates with the boys in financing any constructive activities which compete with criminal activities, such as singing groups, supplying sports equipment, memberships to YMCA, etc. These goods and services are delivered <u>immediately</u> upon request by the group. It is

essential, therefore, that the SCORE worker have his funds available for immediate use. The long delays required for committee approval are incompatible with the moment to moment existence of street corner boys. When the group has moved into its own quarters and SCORE is "in business" a second stage has begun. During this stage it is likely that the SCORE project will begin in earnest, that the boys will understand the problems involved in crime reduction and that more systematic activities such as running a newspaper, holding self-help group meetings, etc. will follow.

Systems Development - The above project, SCORE, is the result of six years of fundamental development begun at Harvard in 1957. Having passed its initial testing phase, SCORE is ready for specific development in at least five communities this year and for more general availability in 1964.

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to the Clinton Planning Council, 227 West 46th Street, New York 36, N. Y., for providing the auspices under which SCORE was conducted. The research and development of SCORE has largely been accomplished through the medium of the Clinton Planning Council. This organization provided funds, the criterion board and other formal requirements for SCORE. More than that, without the encouragement of its lay and professional members and their time-consuming devotion to SCORE and its progress, the present report would be considerably less hopeful in tone.

SCORE was also supported by a grant from The Ford Foundation through Brooklyn College of the City University of New York and by a grant from The Aaron E. Norman Fund.

The views set forth in this description are, however, those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of any organization other than SCORE.